

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# **News Release**

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Joseph Thompson has received Senate confirmation of his appointment by President Clinton as Under Secretary for Benefits at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Thompson, 50, a career VA employee and Air Force Vietnam veteran, will head the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), overseeing the delivery of monetary benefits to the nation's 25.5 million veterans through 58 regional offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

VBA has a potential clientele of about one-third of the nation's population and last fiscal year paid out some \$26 billion in compensation, pension and education benefits, home loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation and life insurance programs.

Before his confirmation, Thompson served as the director of the VA Regional Office in New York City. That office was the first recipient of Vice President Gore's "Hammer Award," which recognizes efforts to make government work better and cost less. Largely as a result of Thompson's efforts, the office streamlined claims processing, improved veterans' satisfaction and developed a number of innovations which have been used as the basis for nationwide changes in the way VA does business.

Under his leadership, the New York Regional Office also received two additional Hammer Awards for initiatives that are being emulated throughout VA's benefits system. Thompson was individually honored in 1994 with the Presidential Rank Award, one of the highest honors given to government executives.

Thompson joined VA in 1975 as a claims examiner at the New York VA Regional Office. In 1977, he accepted a position as a consultant in VA's Education Service in Washington, D.C.

Later, as an administrative officer for VBA, he reviewed operations and allocated resources for VA regional offices from Maine to Puerto Rico. Thompson was then named assistant director at the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center, before assuming his position as Director of the New York Regional Office in 1990.

Thompson holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Pace University in New York and an MPA from George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. He and his wife, Sandy, have three children: Joe, Matt and Allison.